

SOUTHAMPTON SALIVA TESTING PROGRAMME

Latest news from across the programme

Dec 2020
Edition 10


BEING PART OF THE PROGRAMME

Another week and another chance for the saliva testing programme to make an important contribution to tackling the COVID pandemic. This time it was through providing results for an evaluation of the type of testing we are doing on the project. This was published last week by the government - [you can read about it here](#).

The results show that the RT-LAMP method of testing which we have been using on the programme, returned sensitivity data that showed it is effective in identifying the cases who are infectious and are most likely to transmit the disease.

We know that it is thanks to this programme and your participation in it that we have been able to help tackle the epidemic - and the good news is you can now participate for longer. You will have already received a letter from your school last week letting you know that we will be continuing the testing when you come back from the Christmas break so you can keep your community safer by continuing to take part.

CREATING COVID WARRIORS

You may remember that we set school students a creative challenge to come up with an imaginative character who could battle the virus using their superpowers and defeat COVID-19. We had an overwhelming response with more than 175 students submitting their ideas. You had so many amazing and creative ideas! We will be using some of your designs to create a team of Covid Warriors to help us all defeat the virus and make good choices. Our team of Superheroes will have capes, masks and a toolbelt containing all the items they need to stay safe- just like in your brilliant designs! Here is a collage of all the entries and we have put a full gallery of the entries [on our blog here](#) and made a video which you [can watch on](#)  - Can you spot your design?



THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

4

Number of schools involved

Percentage of students tested
last week

78%*

91%

Percentage of staff tested last week

Volume of saliva from school
staff and students tested last
week

806
mls

* of those students in school and able to return a sample

VIEW FROM THE CITY

*Figures as of 18 November


3,861 total number
of cases

216 Number in
last 7 days

- 242 Change in
last 7 days

Data correct at the
time of publication but
subject to revision due
to reporting delays -
see more at the
[Southampton Data
Observatory](#)

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

 **Do we need to carry on testing now a vaccine is on its way?**

Absolutely yes! It is great news that a vaccine has been approved, but the process of distributing it across the country will take many months. The vaccine is being rolled out according to priority groups like older people and those who work in healthcare. It will take time for enough people to be vaccinated to achieve what's known as herd immunity from COVID-19; that's where a community is protected when enough of the population is either vaccinated or becomes immune. As COVID-19 is a new virus we don't yet know how long immunity from the vaccine will last before re-vaccination is needed. Until then getting tested regularly, continuing to wash our hands, wear a mask and adhere to Tier 2 restrictions, remains the best way to protect ourselves.

A VIRTUAL AUDIENCE WITH DR CHRIS AND DR XAND

Students from some of the schools that are taking part in our testing programme got the chance to chat with Dr Chris and Dr Xand, best known for their children's TV series Operation Ouch! The presenters hosted a virtual question and answer session for young people to ask questions about Coronavirus.

Questions included whether more people will get ill now it is winter, why there is a number 19 after COVID, how we can find coronavirus in our saliva and when things will be back to normal - I think we would all like to hear the answer to that one!

If you have a query about the programme, please visit the [Southampton City Council webpage](#). You can use this page to contact the support team via webchat or you can use the freephone number: 0808 196 2282. Normal hours are 8.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 11am - 3pm.

Storicise

The session will be used as part of a number of resources that are being made available to teachers and children throughout the UK on an online platform known as Storicise.

A big thank you to all those who took part in the event that will really help lots of other young people understand what they need to do to keep safe.

